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PASTORAL LETTER

BY THE

BISHOP OF LINCOLN,

1880-81.



LINCOLN :
JAMES WILLIAMSON, 290, HIGH STREET.
1880.

TO THE REV.
THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN.

Rischolme, Lincoln,

November 23, 1880.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN,

Let me invite your attention to the following subjects :

1. BURIAL LAWS AMENDMENT ACT, 1880.

In order to ascertain the opinions of the Clergy on several questions arising from this Act, I convened a Meeting of Archdeacons and Rural Deans of the Diocese, and of the Canons-residentiary and Non-residentiary of the Cathedral Church.

This meeting was held on Friday, Oct. 22nd.

I announced to the meeting, that after careful consideration, and after taking legal advice, I was resolved not to consecrate any portions of Cemeteries, or additions to Church-yards, subject to the operation of that Act.

My reasons for this resolution have been stated in a printed letter dated Oct. 18 last, from which I make the following extracts:—

I regard Consecration as a solemn religious act. By it,—in the case of a Graveyard—the land is separated from all other uses, and is set apart as a sacred gift to Almighty God. By that act He becomes the owner of it. It is ‘God’s acre.’

Hitherto, under the Cemetery Acts (10 & 11 Vict., c. 65 ; 15 & 16 Vict., c. 85 ; and 16 & 17 Vict., c. 134) a Bishop was empowered by Law to Consecrate a portion of a Cemetery ; such portion being reserved under the provisions of those Acts for ‘interments according to the rites of the Church of England,’ and it was expressly provided, that such portion should ‘*be used only for burials according to those rites.*’ (10 & 11 Vict., c. 65, sect. 23.)

Another portion of the ground was, by those Acts, to be left unconsecrated, for other interments.

But *those Acts* have now been *virtually repealed* by the ‘Burial Laws Amendment Act.’

No part of any Cemetery can now be reserved for Burials ‘according to the rites of the Church of England.’ Every part of every Cemetery is free and open for all burials alike, performed by any minister or member,—man or woman—of any denomination calling itself Christian.

I should be sorry to give offence to any one. But, while I am bound to declare that Consecration, performed by a Bishop of the Church of England, is a solemn religious act, in which a portion of land is dedicated to Almighty God for His honour and service, according to a certain form of doctrine and worship, received by the Church of England, I am no less constrained to say, that false

doctrine and heresy are condemned by Almighty God,—in His holy Word—especially such false doctrine and heresy as denies the God-head of Christ (2 John 10, 11 ; 2 Pet. ii. 1), and by consequence rejects the faith in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, in Whose Name every Baptism in the Church of England is administered ; and that wilful Schism is also declared in that Word to be a grievous sin, a work of the carnal mind (1 Cor. iii. 3--5), and that ‘to be carnally minded is death’ (Rom. viii. 6).

I cannot therefore suppose that I should be doing an act well-pleasing to God, if I were to profess to offer to Him, by Consecration, a portion of land, which, soon after its Consecration, may be used for services and for addresses (which no one can tell what they may be), by persons who deny—and teach others to deny—Christ’s God-head and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity—to say nothing of other dangerous errors—and who not only deprave the Church by heresy, but rend it asunder by schism. I could not venture to dedicate to God what may be thus desecrated on the next day after Consecration.

I do not believe that there is any Church in Christendom—guiding itself by Ecclesiastical Law and usage—which would empower and authorize a Bishop to consecrate a Burial-ground under the conditions now imposed on such places in England by the ‘Burial Laws Amendment Act of 1880.’ Let me refer to one Church. In a text-book of the Gallican Church—the Church of Bossuet and Fénelon—I find it said that wherever ground is used for the burial of persons of various sects and heresies, calling themselves Christian, there the *Church cannot consecrate such ground*. It would be contrary to her conscience to do so. The Consecration of a Burial-ground in which not only the members of all religious sects calling themselves Christian (of which there are about 130 in England) may be interred promiscuously, but also in which the ministers and members of every such sect may *officiate indiscriminately*, would, I venture to think, be a *consecration of the principle of religious indifference*.

Besides, this question ought to be argued on the principles of honesty and justice. Since the passing of the “Burials Act,” *every part of every Cemetery*, new or old, belongs as much to our *Non-conformist brethren as it does to the Church of England*.

Some Nonconformists have a conscientious scruple *against Consecration*. They regard it, not only as an idle and unmeaning thing, but as a superstitious ceremony. What right has a Bishop, let me ask, to go and perform a ceremony—the ceremony of Consecration—which many call “a relic of Romish mummary” ; and to perform it in ground which belongs as much to them as it does to the Church ? If he were to do so, might not some of them perhaps meet him at the gate of the Cemetery, and warn him off the ground ? Might they not perhaps forbid him to commit an act of trespass upon it in the name of religion ?

I have no wish to do what seems scarcely fair ; or to come to a place and be allowed to consecrate it only on sufferance ; or to run the risk of being censured for an act of Episcopal aggression.

In some foreign countries, as is well known, in burial-places which are *not consecrated*, the Parish Priest, commissioned by the Bishop, uses a form of *Benediction over every several grave* at the time of interment. I am advised by the Chancellor of this Diocese that it would be competent for a Bishop of a Diocese in England to frame and sanction such a form for use in such places in his own Diocese.

The form of '*Consecration*' which has hitherto been used in Churchyards and Cemeteries in England, may differ in different Dioceses ; and rests solely on the Bishop's authority, and not on that of Convocation or Parliament.

I am informed that it would be equally in his power to frame and authorize a form of *Benediction* such as I have now described ; and inasmuch as such form of Benediction would only be used over a grave in a Burial-ground that has *not been consecrated*, it might be legally introduced into the Burial Service of the Church of England at the grave ; as prayers—authorized by the Bishop—are now introduced into *Morning Prayer in a church just before it is consecrated*. I propose therefore to authorize a form of Benediction for use in such cases in this Diocese. (See below, Form C., p. 6.)

It may be as well to add, that burial-places may still be *vested in Trustees* for interments according to the rites of the Church of England (by 36 and 37 Vict., cap. 50), and such burial-places would be Consecrated.

At the Meeting, above mentioned, the following *Special Forms*, A and B and C,* were put forth by me as Ordinary for use in this Diocese ; of which Forms A and B are in accordance with the provisions of Sect. 13 of the 'Burial Laws Amendment Act.'

Form A (in substance the same as recommended by the Convocation of the Province in their Report to Her Majesty, July 4, 1879).

A.—FORM OF SERVICE which may be used, in any case, at the request of the relative or friend or legal representative, having charge of, or being responsible for, the burial of the deceased.

The three sentences of the Scriptures to be said or sung on meeting the Corpse at the entrance of the Burial-Ground.

One or both of the following Psalms,

Ps. XXXIX. or XC.

The LESSON, 1 Cor. xv. 20 ;

or 1 Thess. iv. 13, to end.

After the Body is deposited in the Grave, the sentences beginning "Man that is born of a woman," &c., ending with the words, "fall from thee," may be said.

* Copies of these Forms may be had of JAMES WILLIAMSON, 290, High Street, Lincoln, at One Shilling for 25 copies, or a Half-penny each copy.

Then shall follow the words,

Lord have mercy, &c.

Then The Lord's Prayer.

Then The grace of our Lord, &c.

Note.—This form is not to be used in the cases for which Form B is provided.

FORM B.—FORM OF SERVICE which may be used, in any case where the Office for the Burial of the Dead in the Book of Common Prayer may *not* be used ; nor the Service A, aforesaid.

After the Body is deposited in the Grave, one or more of the following Psalms, at the discretion of the Minister, may be said :

PSALM VI.

PSALM XXV.

„ XXXVIII.

CXXX.

„ CXLIII.

Then the sentences in the Burial Service, “ Man that is born of a woman,” ending with “ fall from thee.”

Then the following Prayers from the LITANY, “ Remember not Lord our offences,” ending with “ day of judgment.”

Then the Minister may proceed to the Prayers in the LITANY, “ That it may please Thee to give us true repentance,” &c., ending with “ Neither reward us after our iniquities.”

Then he may proceed to the words in the LITANY, “ From our enemies defend us O Christ,” and go on to the end of the Litany.

FORM C.—A FORM OF BENEDICTION at a Grave, in an unconsecrated Burial-Ground ; which may be said before the body is laid in the Grave.

O Merciful God, with Whom the death of Thy Saints is precious, and Who hast taught us in Thy Holy Word that the bodies of the faithful are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, and that, having been sown in weakness, they will be raised in power ; we humbly beseech Thee to sanctify this Grave to be a peaceful resting-place for the mortal remains of our dear brother here departed ; and grant, O Lord, that we, with all those that are departed this life in Thy true faith and fear, and are fallen asleep in Christ, may attain to the resurrection of the just, and may have the full fruition of perfect bliss and everlasting glory, both in body and soul, in Thy heavenly kingdom, through Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life, Who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, and Who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. *Amen.*

You will observe that the use of these Forms is in *no case* obligatory, but only *permissive*.

At the same Meeting (held Oct. 22nd), I was requested to communicate with all the Rural Deans of the Diocese, and to desire them to take counsel with their respective Ruridecanal Chapters, so that every Clergyman in the Diocese might have an opportunity of expressing his opinion on the following points, and to report to me the result.

Accordingly on Oct. 26th, I addressed the following letter to all the Rural Deans :—

In accordance with a Resolution adopted at a Meeting of Archdeacons, Rural Deans, Canons Residentiary and Non-residentiary, held at the Bishop's Hostel, on Friday, October 22nd, I request you to have the goodness to take counsel with your Ruridecanal Chapter on the following questions arising from the “ *Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880* ” :—

1. As to the expediency of the allowance—or non-allowance—of *Funerals on Sundays*.

2. As to the *tolling of the Bell* of the Parish Church at funerals other than those conducted by the Clergy with the Services of the Church.
3. As to the *registration* of such funerals.
4. As to the Section 9 of the Act. How can it best be worked ?

I would thank you to communicate to me the result of your deliberations on these questions as soon as convenient.

It need hardly be said, that *uniformity of practice* with regard to them throughout the Diocese is very desirable.

I have now received returns from almost all the Rural Deaneries, and am enabled, after having ascertained the opinions of the Clergy, and, after weighing them well, to declare my own judgment on the several questions proposed to them.

1. *Funerals on Sundays* are to be discouraged ; and only to be allowed in exceptional cases, and for special and urgent reasons.

2. The *tolling of the bell* of the Parish Church is not to be allowed at such burials as are to take place in *Churchyards*, and are not to be conducted by the Clergy with the Services of the Church.

I have restricted the prohibition to funerals in *Churchyards*, because I observe in one Deanery, in a large town, there is a general concurrence of the Clergy in favour of conceding the use of the bell in all cases ; but this is where the funerals do *not* take place in a *Churchyard*, but in a *Cemetery* or *Cemeteries* distant from the Church.

The fact seems to be, that, waiving the questions arising from the Canons of 1603, Canons 67 and 88 (Phillimore, p. 1756), which contemplated only such Services as those of the Church of England, it is unhappily too evident that a great danger to which she is now exposed is this, that, her *Churchyards* having been thrown open to different religious services, her *Churches* may also be diverted from the holy uses to which they have long been dedicated, and be given up to all who desire to hold their services in them, whatever those services may be. The belfries of many of our Churches are only accessible through the Church itself, and unseemly strifes may occur if when the Church is once opened for the tolling of the bell at a funeral, it is not allowed to remain open for the performance of the funeral service within it. And when funeral services, other than those of the Church of England, are allowed to be performed in our Churches, it does not require much foresight to perceive that a claim will be soon set up for the performance of other services in them.

We shall never, I hope, be provoked by a sense of wrong to give way to other feelings than those of Christian charity in matters like these. But we must also remember that we owe piety and reverence to God, and to holy things and places, as well as charity to men ; and also that we owe a debt of charity, not only to our dissenting brethren, but also to the members of the church, especially to those entrusted to our spiritual charge ; and that it is not charity to our people, nor even is it charity to dissenters, to betray what we have received as a solemn trust, and what we ought to defend.

It is not charity to tempt anyone to imagine that unity in the truth is not prescribed by God, or that schism and false doctrine are not displeasing to Him. It is not charity to flatter some in sin, and to discourage others who desire to hold the truth, and who look to us for help and guidance to do so.

On the whole therefore I hope that the Clergy of the Diocese will unite in giving effect to that which is the opinion of the great majority of their brethren, and in not allowing the use of the Church Bell for Funerals in a Churchyard other than those conducted by the Clergy.

3. I concur fully in the almost unanimous opinion of the Clergy that all burials should be registered by the Minister in charge of the Parish, and I would recommend the adoption of the following form of registration of burials, other than those solemnized by a Clergyman;

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BURIALS SOLEMNIZED IN THE PARISH OF _____ IN THE COUNTY OF
LINCOLN, IN THE YEAR 1880.

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Abode.</i>	<i>When Buried.</i>	<i>Age.</i>	<i>By whom the Ceremony was performed.</i>
A. B.	Holbeach	1880, Nov. 10	76	
As certified No.	under the	"Burial Laws	Amen	dment Act 1880," by C.D.

4. The opinions of the Clergy vary considerably as to the application of Sect. 9. On the whole I incline to the opinion of those who think that what the Act gives to Parishioners should not be denied to Non-Parishioners whose relatives are buried in the Churchyard. But inasmuch as the Churchyard is the freehold of the Clergyman in trust for the Parishioners, and inasmuch as the Parishioners, who are members of the Church of England, have alone contributed to the acquisition, and also still contribute to the maintenance, of the Churchyard, I do not think that they who contribute nothing to it, and whose free access to it might soon fill the Churchyard, and thus cause inconvenience and expense to the Parishioners, ought to be allowed an unrestricted use of the Churchyard, and therefore I would limit the use of it to those non-Parishioners whose relatives are buried in it.

ON THE OBSERVANCE OF ROGATION DAYS AND ASCENSION DAY.

The present depressed state of the Agricultural interest in this Diocese, and throughout England, leads us to raise our eyes upwards and to seek for help by prayer. This distress may be regarded as

a divine Visitation designed by Almighty God to call us to examine ourselves and to humble ourselves before Him, and to confess our sins and the sins of our Country to Him, and to amend our lives, and to pray to Him for mercy and blessings spiritual and temporal ; and the Church having appointed certain days called *Rogation Days* (viz., the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day) for supplication to Almighty God, and for the deprecation of Divine Judgments, and for intercession on behalf of the Church and Realm, I would earnestly desire you to make the best use you can of this appointment and opportunity.

I would suggest that in their Sermons on the Sunday before Ascension Day the Clergy should call the attention of their congregations to this subject, and should direct their thoughts to our glorified Lord and King, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, our Great High Priest in Heaven, Who ever liveth to make Intercession for us.

In the Homilies set forth by authority in the year 1563 (copies of which may be had of S.P.C.K. and of the Prayer Book and Homily Society), are four Sermons on the proper observance and use of the Rogation Days.

Any of the following PSALMS may be used, at the discretion of Minister :—PSALM 4, 23, 34, 37, 62, 65, 107, 126, 144, 147, 148.

The following PROPER LESSONS :—*First Lesson*, Genesis viii. ; Deuteronomy viii., xxviii. 1 to 15 ; I. Kings viii. 22 to 54 ; I. Kings xvii. to 17 ; Job i. ; Proverbs iii. ; Jeremiah v. ; Joel ii. 15 ; Habakkuk iii.—*Second Lesson*, Matthew vi. 24 to vii. 13 ; Luke xviii. 1 to 15 ; II. Corinthians ix. ; James iv. 13 to end of chap. v.

The following Prayers may be used :—

PRAYERS FOR A GOOD HARVEST.

O GOD, heavenly Father, whose gift it is that the rain doth fall, beasts increase, and fishes do multiply, we beseech Thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth ; and grant that we, receiving Thy bountiful liberality, may use the same to Thy glory, the relief of those that are in need, and our comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O LORD, we beseech Thee mercifully to hear us in our troubles and adversities, and to turn from us those evils which we most righteously have deserved ; and of Thy great goodness to give us fair weather, fruitful seasons, plenteous harvests, and contrite and thankful hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Collects in the Book of Common Prayer for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, the fifth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and twenty-second Sundays after Trinity, or any of them may be used ; also the Prayer of Unity.

Portions of the COMMINATION SERVICE may be used.

Hymns for the Rogation Days may be found in "Church Hymns" of S.P.C.K. and in "Hymns Ancient and Modern"; and in other Hymn Books.

For information concerning the institution and use of Rogation Days, reference may be made to Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book XIII., Chapter 1., Book XXI., Chapter 2; Bruns *Concilia*, II., page 165; Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals*, page 426; George Herbert's *Country Parson*, Chapter XXXV.; Wheatley on *The Common Prayer*, chap. v., Section XX.

Let me take this opportunity of thanking you for your ready compliance with the wish expressed by me in a former Pastoral Letter for the better observance of ASCENSION DAY, which I trust is now generally kept, with Divine Service, Sermon, and Holy Communion, in almost all Parishes of the Diocese.

DAY OF INTERCESSION FOR MISSIONS.

I need not repeat what was said by me in a Pastoral Letter addressed to you a few weeks ago. Let me only express an earnest hope that in all Parishes (and they are a great majority in this Diocese) where Rogation Tuesday or one of the seven days after it (except Ascension Day) is not convenient for the purpose, *St. Andrew's Day*, November 30th, or one of the seven days after it may be observed as a day of Intercession for the Missions of the Church.

PROPOSED NEW SEE OF SOUTHWELL.

1. The *Diocese of Lincoln* is the largest in territorial area among all the Dioceses of England and Wales. It is in extent more than two millions and a quarter of a million of acres, and consists of the two Counties of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, and contains more than 800 Benefices, and more than 1,000 Clergy. It therefore *ought to be divided*.

2. The *County of Lincoln*—extending over more than a million and three-quarters of a million of acres, and containing about 600 Benefices, and more than 700 Clergy, *is quite sufficient to form a separate Diocese*.

3. The population of the County of Nottingham has *nearly trebled itself* since the year 1801, and is rapidly increasing; and the population of the County of Derby has also *nearly trebled itself* since the year 1801, and is likewise rapidly increasing; and the united population of these two Counties will probably soon be nearly *a million of souls*. These two Counties therefore would amply suffice to form a separate Diocese.

4. The Dioceses of Lincoln and Lichfield have no prospect of being relieved except by the union of the Counties of Nottingham and Derby in one Diocese with an Episcopal See at Southwell with independent Episcopal authority, jurisdiction, and patronage, and this union has received the sanction of the Legislature.

5. Southwell, with its ancient Episcopal Palace, and other Ecclesiastical buildings, especially its noble Collegiate Church, with its interesting Christian associations and traditions, of twelve hundred years, and formerly the Mother Church of Nottinghamshire, has strong claims to be the See of the new Diocese. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in whom the property of the suspended prebends or canonries is vested, are restoring the Church at Southwell, which will, ere long, be equal in grandeur and beauty to most English Cathedrals.

6. This is not a personal question. More than twenty-five years ago my predecessor in the See of Lincoln,—in the prime of life and vigour,—stated in a letter to the Cathedral Commissioners his opinion that the Episcopal work of this Diocese was too great for any one man, and that it ought to be divided, with a new See at Southwell. It is not necessary for me to say that his successor,—in his 74th year—is quite unequal to the physical exertion required of a Bishop of Lincoln, even with the valuable help of a Suffragan. But he does not mention this for his own sake,—(except with a view of asking your indulgence and forbearance)—but for that of the Diocese. He pleads on its behalf with the Clergy and Laity; and earnestly entreats them to co-operate in a work which will confer great good on the two Dioceses of Lichfield and Lincoln, and thus promote the divine glory and the welfare of immortal souls.

Earnestly asking for the help of your prayers, and heartily commending you and your Parishes to the blessing of Almighty God,

I am, Rev. and Dear Brethren,

Yours affectionately,

C. LINCOLN.

P.S.—The sum now required for the endowment of the new See at Southwell is about £36,000. The building and grounds for the residence of the future Bishop have been provided by the generosity of the Bishop Suffragan of Nottingham, who has purchased the ancient Archiepiscopal Palace at Southwell for this purpose. Subscriptions may be paid to the Ven. the ARCHDEACON OF NOTTINGHAM, Farndon Vicarage, Newark; the Rev. C. W. MARKHAM, Saxby Rectory, Barton-on-Humber; the Rev. ARTHUR F. SUTTON, or F. H. STENTON, Esq., Southwell, Notts.; or contributions may be paid to the account of the Southwell Bishopric, at the “Additional Home Bishoprics Endowment Fund,” at the London and Westminster Bank, No. 1, St. James’s Square, London, W., or to the Rev. ARTHUR J. INGRAM, Hon. Finance Secretary, 7, Whitehall, London, S.W.

A PRAYER FOR THE INCREASE OF THE EPISCOPATE.

O LORD JESU CHRIST, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Who didst continue all night in prayer, and then didst choose Thine Apostles, and hast bidden us pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest to gather fruit to life eternal, and hast promised to be with Thine Apostles alway even unto the end of the world ; we beseech Thee to quicken and bless the endeavours and offerings of Thy people for an increase of Bishops in Thy Church [*especially in this Diocese*], and to raise up faithful men for the work of the Apostleship, in spreading forth Thy Gospel, in dispensing Thy Word and Sacraments, in laying on of hands in Confirmation, in ordering of Priests and Deacons, in ministering sound doctrine and godly discipline by driving away error and by defence of Thy truth ; and in watchful oversight, wise and loving guidance, and good government of Thy Church ; and to all who are called to that holy office give Thy grace and heavenly benediction, that they may faithfully serve before Thee to Thy honour and glory, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, One God, blessed for ever. *Amen.*



